period of time; unless the ponds are properly lined.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Prawn farms need State Pollution Control Board's consent to establish and operate, and the board can lay down appropriate conditions to prevent seepage of salt water into the adjoining ground water tables.

Water cess is chargeable on the sea water pumped into prawn farms and this acts as a disincentive to the excessive use of sea water for prawn cultivaiton.

Proposals pending under Forests (Conservation) Act, 1980

7662. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 202 given in the Rajya Sabha on 23rd February, 1994 and state:

(a) the number of proposals which are pending under Forests (Conservation) Act with reasons therefor; and

(b) what steps have been taken up Government so that development projects are not held up because of the procedural delays under the Forests (Conservation) Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) As on 31.5.1994, 143 proposals were pending with the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. These proposals were pending at various stages of examination in accordance with provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, Forest (Conservation) Rules, 1981 and guidelines issued thereon.

(b) After discussing the issue in various fora including the State Forest Minister's Conference held during February 1992, it was decided to further decentralise and streamline examination of proposals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Accordingly, Forest (Conservation) Rules, 1981 have been suitably amended on 21.5.1992 and revised consolidated guidelines for examination of proposals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 have been issued on 25.10.1992. Revised consolidated guidelines interalia include delegation of powers to Regional Chief Conservator of Forests to finally decide proposals involving diversion of forest land upto 5 ha. excluding proposals in respect of regularisation of encroachments and mining and initial examination of all proposals involving diversion of forest land upto 20 ha. It also provides for relaxation in the norms of raising of compensatory afforestation over non forest land for certain categories of proposals.

Forest Cover in the Country

7663. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 204 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 23rd February, 1994 and state:

(a) what is the percentage of forest cover at present in Uttar Pradesh; and

(b) how does it compare with other states in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) As per the State of Forest Report 1993 of the Forest Survey of India, the actual forest cover of the State of Uttar Pradesh is 11.5% of the total geographical area of the State.

(b) A comparative statement of the percentage of forest area of various States/UT's annexed.